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## ON THE BITE OF THE RATTLESNAKE.

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By Joseph Savage, of Lawrence.

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It has fallen to my lot to narrate to you, briefly, some of the experiences of our worthy President, Prof. F. H. Snow, while suffering from the bite of a rattlesnake, which occurred during his expedition upon the plains of Western Kansas, last summer.

The party were in camp about fifteen miles south of Buffalo station, upon a small stream known as Hackberry creek. There were in the party Profs. Snow and Mudge, with students Foster and Dyche. The bite was received upon the twenty-seventh day of June, 1878. The circumstances attending it came about in the following manner:

In the morning Prof. Snow went from camp about two miles, to what is known as Cathedral Rock; this rock is a high bluff and a prominent landmark in all that region. He was here alone, until about eleven o'clock, when he returned to camp, holding a small rattlesnake in his left hand, and in his right he had a portion of the vertebral column of a fossil fish, somewhat distorted into the shape of a good sized pistol. The Professor remarked, playfully, as he reached camp, that he had a snake in one hand and a pistol to shoot it with in the other. The snake had three rattles and a button. It was decided, after some debate, to put the snake into alcohol for preservation. For this purpose a bottle with a long, small neck was produced, and after some further discussion as to methods, it was thought safest to introduce the snake into the bottle tail foremost. To this the snake objected, and in the struggle between the man and the snake, in an unguarded moment, the right hand was held above the head of the snake, when the venomous reptile, with the coils of its tail placed firmly against the neck of the bottle, darted upward with one convulsive spring taking with it the left hand and arm of its captor, and buried its poisonous fangs in the tip of the second finger of the right hand. Now, almost all men have, from habit, some ejaculation which will gush forth in times of excitement without their consent; so it was with the subject of this story, and out it came: "By George, he has bitten me." As quick as thought the reptile was thrown upon the ground and held in place by the foot, while the poor bleeding finger was instantly placed in the mouth and vigorously sucked.

Both our President and Vice-President expressed themselves pleased with having a long-cherished desire gratified of seeing the effects of a rattlesnake bite. The latter gentleman, however, expressed his willingness to have the bite on some one besides himself, while the former submitted to the inevitable without grumbling. A string was immediately tied around the bitten finger, just above the knuckle, and the bite was soon lanced, to let the blood flow more freely. The pain from the bite was very severe, the most intense of any ever before experienced, and was compared to having a hundred hot needles thrust into one's flesh, all at once. The subject of the bite had had the nerve of a tooth pulled out by a dentist, the pain of which was as nothing compared to this pain from the bite. In two or three minutes the intensity of the pain subsided into a good sound wholesome ache, which, after twenty-four hours, entirely ceased. In a few moments after the bite, the finger had swollen to nearly twice its usual size, and had turned nearly black; it was then lanced upon one side, relieving it somewhat; after another half hour it was lanced again upon the other side,

affording more relief. In about three minutes after the bite, the patient grew slightly faint, and lay down upon the ground awhile, during which period Prof. Mudge, with one of the students, continued sucking the wound.

One hour after the bite, the string was removed from the finger, after which the hand and wrist swelled up to about twice their natural size, and the arm became much discolored. The swelling had entirely subsided in forty-eight hours, but the discoloration continued for a week. The wound caused by the bite healed in two weeks, without loss of the nail. The nail, however, from some cause, showed a black spot upon it, just opposite the bite, which spot has just disappeared three months afterward. The pulse of the patient, five hours after the bite, had fallen down to fifty per minute; two hours later it had risen to fifty-six; the next morning it was beating at sixty, and in twenty-four hours it had regained its usual rate. It may be also interesting to note, that Prof. Snow responded promptly to the dinner-call, and ate so much more than usual, that the cook suggested that a few more snake bites in camp would exhaust the supply of food on hand, and an extra trip to the station for supplies would be inevitable. To the surprise of all, the Professor was out all the afternoon, collecting as eagerly as though nothing unusual had happened to him.

In regard to the number of rattlesnakes killed during a sojourn of thirty days upon the plains, only fifteen are recorded.

It should also be stated that Prof. Mudge took the snake in charge while Prof. Snow was lying down, and put it into the bottle head-foremost, without any apparent difficulty, so now our President can not only inform his classes in natural history the best method of treating a rattlesnake bite, but also inform them of the latest and most approved style of bottling them.

Another rattlesnake bite came under the special notice of the writer, in the harvest field of his brother, Mr. Forrest Savage.

It was received by one of the harvest hands, Mr. George Risley, while engaged in binding wheat during our last summer's harvest. The reaper had just passed over the snake, and Mr. Risley was binding close behind it. The bite was received on the second finger of the right hand, just above the knuckle-joint, while in the act of taking up a gavel for binding. The snake seemed to be concealed beneath the bundle, and was probably irritated somewhat by the previous passage of the reaper near its resting place, or, it may be, over a part of its body. Mr. Risley describes the bite as a blow, accompanied by a hot, burning sensation. When he withdrew his hand from underneath the grain, the snake followed with its fang still buried in his finger. A single jerk of the arm failed to release its hold, and not until a second and more vigorous motion of the arm did the reptile's fang tear its way from the cuticle of the finger; and now, six months afterwards, a large scar marks the place where the bite was given. The snake was killed—it had six rattles and a button. The alarm was immediately given to the other hands in the field, and a man was dispatched at once to the nearest house—that of Mr. Bates—for whiskey. About a pint was obtained and swallowed, as Mr. Risley expresses it, "straight."

By this time—about ten minutes after the bite—the arm had swollen to about twice its natural size, and had turned to a very dark and mottled color. The whisky reduced the swelling almost instantly, and partially restored it to its natural color. The swollen arm was then tightly bandaged, and the young man was soon carried in a buggy, the distance of two miles, to his home. Arriving home, his over-anxious friends administered about as much more whisky as was taken in the field. Then the patient became unconscious and almost unmanageable until the next morning, when he des-

cribes the pain of his scalded throat, and his burning thirst, as almost intolerable.

Dr. May was called to treat the case, which he did in the usual way of cauterizing the wound, and freely applying iodine to the affected arm. The patient kept his room for about two weeks, with loss of appetite, and general debility; after which he carried his hand in a sling, and suffered much from numbness and lack of feeling in the bitten finger. It has now entirely recovered its wonted consciousness, and Mr. Risley insists that if he ever binds wheat again is shall be done with gloves on both his hands.

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### ADDITIONS TO THE CATALOGUE OF KANSAS BIRDS.

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By Prof. F. H. Snow, University of Kansas.

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The third edition of the Catalogue of Kansas Birds contained 295 species. The following additions have since been made:

296. *Neocorys Spraguei* Aud. Missouri Skylark. This species was taken at Ellis, by Dr. Louis Watson, Nov., 1877. Dr. Watson states that his specimen was found solitary, but that he is satisfied that this species is "not rare in Ellis county—present every winter, and in company with Shorelarks and Longspurs."

297. *Melanerpes torquatus* Wilson. Lewis's Woodpecker. Also taken at Ellis by Dr. Watson, May 6th, 1878. One specimen was obtained from a flock of six or eight.

298. *Nyctiardea violacea* Linn. Yellow-crowned Night-Heron. Taken at Neosho Falls by Col. N. S. Goss, who killed three young birds and one adult female in breeding plumage, with eggs nearly full-formed in the ovaries.

299. *Ardea eaerulescens* Linn. Blue Goose. This species also was taken by Col. Goss at Neosho Falls. One bird was killed from a flock of ten or twelve.

300. *Xema Sabinei* Sab. Fork-tailed Gull. A single specimen, a young male, flew late at night through the open door of Peter Long's saloon, at Humboldt, Sept. 19, 1876. Reported to me by Col. N. S. Goss, who secured the specimen for his cabinet.

301. *Sterna hirundo* Linn. Wilson's Tern, or Common Tern. This species was in the first edition of the Birds of Kansas, but was stricken out from subsequent editions from fear that it had been confounded with Forster's Tern. It is now restored to the list by Col. N. S. Goss, who procured a specimen in Anderson county.

302. *Pyrgita domestica* Linn. The English Sparrow. This bird has become an abundant resident of Topeka, having been introduced by Hon. F. C. Giles in 1874. A small flock of about a dozen birds has been observed by the writer in Lawrence.

To this list may be added the following varieties of species already catalogued:

55a. *Icteria virens* var. *longicauda* Lawr. Taken along the Smoky Hill river in Western Kansas, by S. W. Williston, in May, 1877.

190a. *Buteo Borealis* Gen. var. *calurus*. Western red-tail. Taken at Ellis, Lawrence and Neosho Falls.